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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: 'Microsoft Settlement'

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To whomever this concerns,

I understand that I have the ability to comment on the proposed settlement between the Justice Department and Microsoft.

I am a dedicated purchaser and user of Apple Computer products. Almost from the beginning, Microsoft has done whatever it felt necessary to undermine the Macintosh platform, starting with the outright 'theft' of the Graphic User Interface that Apple used to revolutionize the computer for the average user. Until Microsoft realized that the platform was going not to be driven into the ground, MS did its best to co-op and/or drive under any developers who saw fit to produce for the Mac. Now Bill Gates has hedged his bets by owning several hundred thousand dollars of Apple stock.

It is widely believed by those familiar with the case that the proposed settlement is completely inadequate. It will do little to punish Microsoft for its plainly illegal conduct in the past, and virtually nothing whatsoever to prevent future violations of antitrust law. As a consumer, it infuriates me to be forced to pay for increasingly expensive software that diminishes in quality with each release. I applauded the Clinton administration's investigation of Microsoft. Their case was an effort to protect consumers and promote economic growth by restoring fairness and competition to the computer industry. At the start of this administration, it all but announced publicly that it was going to let Microsoft off scot-free, by Attorney General Ashcroft stating that he didn't think the government had a case, thereby, in poker terms, flagrantly showing the other side his cards.

As the nation's legal advocate for citizens against the unchecked abuses of a corporate entity, this act was unconscionable.

The United States is a successful nation because its free markets encourage firms to compete for customers by producing high-quality, low-cost goods. This system needs to be protected from monopolists who gain so much power that they can destroy the competitive nature of the markets in which they participate.

I urge all parties involved to reconsider the proposed settlement. Microsoft deserves more than a slap on the wrist for its destructive abuse of its monopoly power. More importantly, American consumers need to be protected against future abuses from a company that sees the political establishment as one to be bought, competitors as enemies to be crushed and where the word 'marketing' can be freely substituted for 'lying.'

Sort of like the management at Enron. We know what kind of oversight they got, don't we?

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